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ABSTRACT

Critical theory (CT), according to the author, is concerned with a critique of the modern rationality that underlies both scientific and industrial projects that subjugate the individuality of the person. He sees CT as an analytical and reflective process that stands next to the reach for empirical verification of the reality of the world and the understanding of meaning-systems. A brief summary of the history of CT is followed by an examination of CT's commentary on instrumental rationality and scientific and philosophical positivism. Applying CT to educational administration, the author claims administrators can profit from a disciplined critique of their own institution if they can portray the institution's role in affecting the lives of its charges. An overarching framework for researching the critical relationships between administration and social structure is proposed that views educational institutions as "speech communities." Within this framework the relationship between given speech communities, and the distribution of knowledge and power to those communities, can be considered. (Author/MLF)

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Symposium - SIG/Organization Theory

"Toward a Critical Theory of Educational Administration"

A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York City, March, 1982

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From Theory

There is a certain arrogance which underlies the appropriation of the term Critical Theory, for this is an historically situated project of the most complex scope and ambition. Associated with the members of the Frankfurt School, Critical Theory took as its subjects the positivism of philosophy and science, the re-thinking of Marxian constructs, and the exposure of systems of political, economic and legal domination. Critical Theory, however, was always concerned with the nature of practice informed by theory, and it is this that encourages us to begin the consideration of a critical theory which may serve in the examination of such a practical field as the administration of schooling. This critical theory indeed receives its inspiration and method from the rigorous formulations of Critical Theory, yet really only represents an attempt to inject critique into the spirit of psychologism which dominates American administrative thinking. That said, the background of Critical Theory requires some explanation.

The origins of Critical Theory lie in the continuation of Hegelian and Marxian dialectical thought and in its application to the political and economic organization of capitalistic society. The nature of Critical Theory is such that its concern lies with the critique of modern rationality which underlies both scientific and industrial projects which subjugate the individuality of the person. As Bernstein (1976, p. 182) says:

> Critical theory aspires to bring the subjects themselves to full self-consciousness of the contradictions implicit in their material existence, to penetrate the ideological mystifications and forms of false consciousness that distort the meaning of existing social conditions.

In the first part of this paper, I would like to expand on these "aspirations" of Critical Theory by examining its commentary on a) instrumental rationality and scientific and philosophical positivism and b) the relationship between theory and practice. A detailed analysis of the foundations of Critical Theory (as the various ideas--both complementary and contradictory--are developed by Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse and other members of the Frankfurt School) is beyond the scope of this paper; the interested reader is referred to Bernstein (1976), Held (1980), Schroyer (1973), McCarthy (1978), Jay (1973), and Arato and Gebhardt (1978).

Positivism and Rationality

According to Sewart (1980: 324), "The leitmotif of the work of the Frankfurt School as a whole can be characterized as a critique of positivism." For Horkheimer and Adorno, positivism was evident when philosophy agreed in some of the following:

> All (synthetic) knowledge is founded in sensory experience. Meaning is grounded in observation.
> Concepts and generalizations only represent the particulars from which they have been abstracted. Conceptual entities don't exist in themselves--they are mere names; positivism is (normally) associated with nominalism.
> Sciences are unified according to the methodology of the natural sciences. The ideal pursued is knowledge 'in the form of a mathematically formulated universal science deducible from the smallest possible number of axioms, a system which assures the calculation of the probable occurrence of all events.'
> Values are not facts and hence values cannot be given as such in sense-experience. Since all knowledge is based on sensory experience, value judgments cannot be accorded the status of knowledge claims. (Held, 1980: 163-164, quoting in part Horkheimer, 1972: 138.)

The claim against the positivist attitude is that it is essentially

a conservative one which, by removing reflective and dialectical thought from the province of meaningful expression, allows the perpetuation of the extant social order. Human rationality becomes only mathematical reason; the calculation of the instruments needed to achieve ends which are pre-ordained by the nature of the productive system. Thus, a false objectivism results, harmless perhaps when it is limited to the individual communities of natural scientists but "dangerous when it is extended to all the areas of the various sciences, and is no longer acknowledged as a fiction" (Wellmer, 1974: 14). Social processes themselves are objectified and the roles of various groups in the community, including the role of domination, is seen as a natural historical development.

In this way, the scientific control over nature is extended to man-as-part-of-nature. Having become a "fact" in the arsenal of scientific discourse, the possibility of value-laden discussion over the meaningfulness of ends is removed from the performance of science itself; yet science has become an irresistible force in the shaping of human history.

The foundation of this positivistic approach to the world lay in the transformation of the concept of reason. A critique of the primacy of instrumental reason was to become a major project of members of the Frankfurt School. Horkheimer, in particular, devoted considerable attention to what he termed the "eclipse of reason" in the modern world and the attendant emphasis on a positivistic social science. Horkheimer distinguished between what he termed "subjective" reason and "objective" reason. Subjective reason is that which inheres in the subject and is oriented toward the discovery of the most "reasonable" means to achieve essentially established ends. Objective reason, however, may be thought of as theology without gods: it refers to the practical

search for ends which are true and right. Objective reason

> ...aimed at evolving a comprehensive system, or hierarchy, of all beings, including man and his aims. The degree of reasonableness of a man's life could be determined according to its harmony with this totality. Its objective structure, and not just man and his purposes, was to be the measuring rod for individual thoughts and actions. (Horkheimer, 1974: 4).

Subjective reason was incorporated as part of this grand design, but remained subordinate to the dialogue on the just state. With the coming of the age of Enlightenment and the destruction of religio-mythical beliefs, subjective reason became the dominant force in social relations. While lip service was paid to the traditional ideals, in reality there was no agency which could relate these ideals to objective social conditions (Horkheimer, 1974: 23). Science, with no concern for the ideal, became the new religion:

> According to the philosophy of the average modern intellectual, there is only one authority, namely, science, conceived as the classification of facts and the calculation of probabilities. The statement that justice and freedom are better in themselves than injustice and oppression is scientifically unverifiable and useless. It has come to sound as meaningless in itself as would the statement that red is more beautiful than blue, or that an egg is better than milk (Horkheimer, 1974: 24).

This concern with logic of the social sciences is continued in the work of Habermas (1970a, 1970b, 1971, 1974, 1975, 1979) who, beginning with a critique of positivism gradually turned toward, I think it could be claimed, a more positive approach to Critical Theory. Habermas engages in his own critique of subjective, or, as he terms it, instrumental and strategic, rationality by distinguishing, first, between two types of human activity: symbolic and communicative, and purposive-rational (1970a: 93). Traditionally, he claims, purposive

or goal-seeking rationality was, as Horkheimer implied, imbedded within an institutional or communicative framework of social action. Given changing social structures, however, purposive-rational action separated from its context:

> The threshold of the modern period would then be characterized by that process of rationalization which commenced with loss of the 'superiority' of the institutional framework to the sub-systems of purposive-rational action. Traditional legitimations could now be criticized against the standards of rationality of means-ends relations (Habermas, 1970a: 114).

Purposive-rationality served the needs of one of what Habermas defines as three basic cognitive "interests" (1971), the technical, the practical and the emancipatory, and "Each of these cognitive interests is grounded in one dimension of human social existence: work, interaction, or power" (Bernstein, 1976: 193). The technical interest is reflected in empirical science - the desire to exert control. The practical interest, however, reflects the need to establish senses of community, shared communication and inter-subjective understanding while the emancipatory interest looks to the identification of the ideal human situation. In a sense, the emancipatory interest remains imbedded within the other two: it serves to provide purpose for the development of law-like statements within the context of open institutions.

Against the position that social science can only be concerned with technical interests, Habermas has begun the reconstruction of critical theory, adding to its negative thrust a positive dimension. Thus, in discussing the modern-day rationality problem (a central focus for current philosophers, Bernstein, 1976: 208), Habermas provides for the development of a "critical" science which can serve the needs of our emancipatory interest and which goes

beyond pure formalism. Sewart (1980: 339) finds that for Habermas:

> A critical theory of society must not only be capable of identifying coercive power relations hidden in cultural meanings (as the critique of ideology), it must also provide for the dissolution of such relations in the very process of interpretation. In this way a critical theory of society must address coercion and unequal social relations with an eye to providing for emancipation from these relations.

A critical theory, then, not only identifies ideological relationships, such as the application of an instrumental rationality to social intercourse for the purpose of industrial advancement, but attempts to cross the gap between theory and practice, indeed identifying this dichotomy, like the fact-value one, as essentially a false categorization. A social or political science which claims as its foundation the development of knowledge isolated from practice (discovering, for example, the "facts" without regard to the "values") is in the position of allowing itself to be used by dominant interest groups, regardless of the other significant questions of self-delusion. Theory, as developed by such a science, and practice, as reflected in the critique and development of social forms, are intimately related. Thus, as McCarthy (1978: ch. 1) discusses, the value-neutrality of positivism was able to expose the pseudo-scientific character of world views which legitimated certain political systems; yet this scientific neutrality was itself ideological and allowed only the application of instrumental reason to human projects. The ultimate result of this application of instrumental reason to human affairs is that public discourse on political agendas is nullified; either "decisionistic" or "technocratic" models come to replace rational discussion of developmental ends. The decisionistic model is that wherein the political action and consciousness of the public at large is limited to voting in or out of office certain politically

elite groups without the possibility of discoursing on the aims of the society. The technocratic model is one where political discourse is eliminated in favor of rational administration; that is, the procedural development of administrative systems which steer the social system in order to provide optimum economic growth and stable administration. In general, the technocratic model has become the dominant driving force behind systemic decisions: "the objective necessity disclosed by experts seems to predominate over the decisions of leaders" (McCarthy, 1978: 9). At their heart, though, the positivistic models are incapable of dealing with the practical problems of human existence. Habermas (quoted in McCarthy, 1978: 11) says:

> But such a rational administration of the world is not simply identical with the solution of the practical problems posed by history. There is no reason for assuming that a continuum of rationality exists extending from the capacity for technical control over objectified processes to the practical mastery of historical processes. The root of the irrationality of history is that we 'make' it without, however, having been able until now to make it consciously. A rationalization of history cannot therefore be furthered by an extended power of control on the part of manipulative human beings, but only by a higher stage of reflection, a consciousness of acting human beings moving forward in the direction of emancipation.

The forward thrust, then, of Habermas' argument lies in the possibility of movement toward emancipatory relations (economic and social). The ideal situation which would result would be when a society permits and endorses the reality of truly rational discourse and, accordingly, one function of Critical Theory becomes both exposing the conditions preventing such discourse and outlining the conditions underlying the possibility of such discourse. This is where, as McCarthy and others have noted, the argument takes a "linguistic turn" with distinctly Freudian overtones. Simply stated, one might claim that

the aim here is the re-embedding of systems of purposive-rational action within systems of communicative interaction. This project would require the application empirical, hermeneutic and critical approaches to social analysis. Some dimensions of the problems of distorted communication will be discussed in a later section.

The Empirico-Hermeneutic Tension

In part, Critical Theory can be seen as an analytical and reflective process which stands adjacent to the search for 1) empirical verification of the reality of the world and 2) understanding of meaning-systems. In this sense, a critical theory must rely on objective and subjective knowledge; on both technical and practical interests. The relationship between these areas is well illustrated by Apel's (1967) analysis of the possibility of a unified science based on the identification of "true" sentences of science. The British school of philosophical positivism was to claim that "any knowledge obtained in the Geisteswissenschaften [cultural/understanding science] must be translatable into sentences of the one, intersubjective language of science, i.e. into the objective language about things and facts" (Apel, 1967: 5). What Apel is able to do is to show that such an "objective" language is premised on some assumptions which destroy it, notably that such sentences must be "understood," and such an understanding implies a pre-understanding of concepts embodied in a community, even a community of scientists. However, "Objective explanation of facts and intersubjective communication about what is to be explained are...complementary aspects of human knowledge -- in the sense in which N. Bohr used the word" (Apel, 1967: 23). He goes on to say (1967: 23):

> They exclude each other and they presuppose each other. Nobody can just 'understand' without presupposing factual knowledge which could be stated explicitly as 'explanations'. On the other hand,

> no natural scientist can explain anything without participating in the intersubjective communication...

The complementarity of subject and object is a principle reflecting the dialectical relationship between symbol and technique. The objective methods of the natural sciences, the hermeneutic methods of the cultural sciences and the reflective methods of the critical sciences must stand in a close and compelling relationship.

While Habermas' presentation of the three cognitive interests shows the basic orientations of the human program, Bernstein (1976: 223) suggests that the categorical distinctiveness of these areas is suspect:

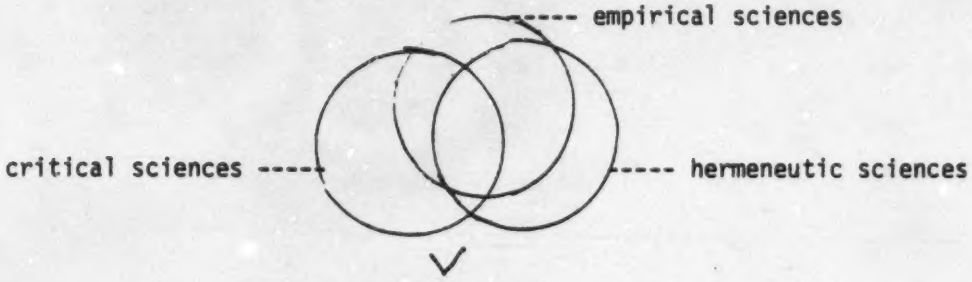
> It is a fiction -- and not a useful methodological one -- to suggest that there are categorically different types of inquiry and knowledge. But it is not a fiction -- rather, it is the locus of the most important controversies about the nature and limits of human knowledge, as it pertains to social and political inquiry -- to see how the battle of competing technical, practical, and emancipatory cognitive interests continues to rage.

Apel is able to show the relationship between the technical and practical interests, and, while neglecting an orientation to critique, allows for the possibility of emancipatory development. A final quote is illustrative of his thinking (1967: 57):

> Statistical methods, for example, are not the beginning of a statistical science of man as a whole, but they are serving objective theories of motivation; the latter are, again, not the beginning of a causally-explaining science of human behavior, but they serve -- as, for example, in psychoanalysis and the critique of ideologies -- the ever new attempts to understand men better than they understand themselves. These attempts to let 'objectification' serve 'disobjectification', i.e. that condition in which man is freed by knowledge to act responsibly, have to be judged according to whether the 'objects' of the theory can become 'subjects' who can incorporate that

theory into their own language and
self-understanding.

A model of the relationships would therefore look like the inter-penetration of three circles, each one informing the other:



(emancipatory relationships)

The inter-relationships of these three human interests are thus oriented toward discovering the possibilities of increasing personal and inter-personal freedom; toward avoiding an institutional dominance so severe that it perverts rationality in the name of rationality.

...To Practice

Educational theorists tend to fall into one of three camps: first, those who see in the development of an educational science the promise of a positive utopia which, in adhering to the "end of ideology" thesis, sees the completely rational potential of institutions; secondly, those who recognize the oppressive potential of institutions and can only see "negative utopia;" thirdly. those who see no utopias at all but hope that systemic changes may attenuate some of the ills. Into the first camp go those whose belief in rational systems management, in management through clarification. in precision and performance. and in the high technology of control mechanisms ordains a future where control of systems is complete and the possibility of unforseen problems remote.

Into the second camp go those whose vocabulary is limited to oppression, who see the demise of the state as imminent, and who attack not only scientism but also science. And into the third camp go those who can see the potential of reflective critique in exposing instances of real domination, who may argue against the contradictions of the system but yet may see factors of liberation in the system.

In other words, one need not be a certified Marxist to profit from much of what Marx and Marxians say; one need not abandon faith in a constitutional system of government in order to discuss the "evils of the class system;" and one need not have to call for a return to charismatic or patriarchical organizational structures in order to point out the limitations and dominations of bureaucracy.

Educational administrators can, in the same fashion, profit from disciplined critique of their own institutions if they can portray the institution's role in affecting the lives of its charges; if, indeed, they can look somewhat beyond the instrumental obligations to the structure of the institution itself as a meaningful event which creates a certain reality for its membership.

There is one major objection to our thesis here which needs to be overcome. This is the charge that administration is a "practical" discipline with its own techniques and methodology and that engaging in critical theorizing and reflection is, ipso facto, not "doing administration" but rather "doing sociology" or "doing philosophy" or whatever other discipline comes to mind. There is indeed support for this charge, principally from Winch's (1958) Wittengsteinian notion of "games" which actors engage in; which, in fact, one needs to participate in before one can understand. Can one, for example, understand the "game" of educational administration without in fact being in

participating in, living in the field of educational administration? This is to say that the field -- as a "practice" or way of life -- lives by its own rules which define and limit the identifiability of the field, for if there were not these rules telling us what educational administration is, how could we then recognize it? Further, that recognition allows us to say that this field is not sociology, nor philosophy.

This objection can be countered through one of several related ways. In the first place, as Apel (1967: 53) shows, Winch engages in a type of cultural relativism which denies the influence and interplay between many "games," if we retain that terminology. Now while it is true that we may know about administration without knowing how to actually administer, it is also true that the knowing about influences and interacts with the knowing how. Should we subscribe to the distinct and categorical separation of fields of knowledge, then we have essentially divorced theory from practice ("praxis"), a state of affairs which leads to the perpetuation of that which is.

A second point that can be made is that educational administration is a sub-discipline; i.e., it calls to other fields for much of its major intellectual direction. Boyan (1981: 12) has noted that there are three "central and salient conditions" that characterize contemporary administrative studies:

> First, internal specialization has increasingly characterized inquiry. Second, the requirements do not exist for emergence of a new, single, synthesizing paradigm to guide research across the entire territory or even within any of the several major specializations. Third, improvement in the states of the several arts has moved unevenly and modestly.

The implication that can be drawn is that the practice of administration requires the integration of those ideas and concepts, which, at another level,

function as specializations, e.g., school finance, policy development, and organizational control. In practice, "doing administration" is often doing those things prescribed by the encompassing parent disciplines.

A third point is related to the above. Administration, as Weber (1968: 225) shows us, "means fundamentally domination through knowledge." The specialized functions of administration require, except in the simplest circumstances, the accumulation of staff and the distribution of authority, and leads to control through the exercise of knowledge to which all are not privy (Bendix, 1966: 292-3).But the power of knowledge is not limited to the functional demands of the situation; it extends to areas of interpersonal relations, leadership structures and even personality. The knowledge of structure, again, is not categorical for administration, though, of course, it could be analyzed as such.

Finally, limitations on the study of administration to the study of technical formulations ignores the life-role that administrators choose for themselves, and disputes the reality that administrators integrate intellectual and soci-emotional demands into their job performance. Administrators can be, and often are, politically conscious and sociologically aware, and both of these conditions are part of "doing administration."

The Empirical Arguments

Efforts to describe and understand the nature of organization and administration must reflect evidence of (1) the regular and orderly universe of structural relations and of (2) the moral universe of meaningful relations. In this sense, we, on the one hand, look at the bureaucratic or the structural/functional or the coupling aspects of the school organization and of its participants, and on the other hand at the interpretation of subjective meaning

and the social construction of shared realities. However, a comprehensive theory of educational administration (or theories), if they are to pursue a critical dimension, must look beyond the description and understanding of the present reality; it must engage in a self-reflective posture regarding the consequences of theory itself. But it does a disservice to critical theory to suggest that such reflection must remain limited to subjectivistic impressions: empirical verification is required; data are necessary.

If we can generally define "administration" as a set of practices concerned with the control, direction and development of the institution, and administrative theory as the abstract classification and clarification of concepts related to this, then it would appear appropriate for both theory and practice to be concerned about data or interpretations which show that schooling, for many, is indeed an imperfect institution.

This is to say that a critical theory of educational administration must be grounded in an analysis of empirical regularities: what do educational organizations do <u>for</u> and <u>to</u> their membership? The development of administrative theory, rather than concentrating on its internal logic (i.e., its functions of planning, controlling, leadership, and so on) should also begin an analysis of itself as a method of legal domination (Weber, 1968) with internal (classroom) and external (social structure) effects.

This orientation has historically largely been ignored in the field. Curti shared a general concern over education in 1935 and has yet to be fully answered:

> Most educators advanced their arguments for increased public support and control of the schools, for certain types of instruction, for particular studies in the curriculum, and for given schemes of administration, without clearly defining or understanding how their proposed

> educational policies were to affect our social institutions. (1935: 581).

Callahan's disturbing indictment of well-meaning educators who became "bookkeepers and public relations men" (1962: 259) is well known and need not be described here. Tyack (1974) and Tyack and Cummings (1977) continues in this vein, offering an interpretative classification of "administrative progressives" and the increasing urbanization and often estrangement of public schools, schools which "have rarely taught the children of the poor effectively -- and this failure has been systematic, not idiosyncratic" (1974: 11).

More recently, of course, mainstream traditions of organizational theory and practice have been called into question not only by a circle of new-methodological scholars but also by mainstream theoreticians themselves, often in a rueful expression of disenchantment. Erickson (1979: 12) writes that "a major reconsideration of what research on educational organization is, or should be, all about" is due. The underscored "should" reflects the dissatisfaction so many of the scholars have with the simple platitudes about the solely descriptive nature of educational research and theory. Griffiths, certainly a mover and shaper of the field, suggests (1979: 43) that "...if educational administration is not in a state of intellectual turmoil, it should be..."

Griffiths sees organizational theory as the parent of administrative theory: I would add that while the parent is analytic, the child must also be integrative. A useful theory of educational administration, if such could be found, would serve to integrate research on the relationship between internal school and classroom events and external social structure, with a critical and dialectical appreciation of how one affects the other.

By the internal characteristics, I think administration and organizational theory must begin to consider such items as how the level of decision-making affects quantity of time used for instruction (Harnischfeger & Wiley, 1976); the relationship between a "strong" principal and "effective" teachers and their positive evaluation of the principalship (Rayder, Abrams and Larson, 1978); the role and task orientation of the principalship (Mintzberg, 1973; Sproul, 1981) and the internal characteristics of classroom structure. Research into these areas has proceeded, yet fails on the one hand to develop the particular value orientations inherent to the study of a subject such as this (e.g., definitions of "effective" and/or "good" teaching and administration) and, on the other hand, to specify clearly the effect of administration particularly.

However, while research into the internal characteristics is necessary it is by no means sufficient. The quality and characteristics of the social/class structure of the society must also be considered when attempting to interpret the effects of education on pupils. To what degree does this intervening variable of status affect pupils' success in school, and if it does, then should we attempt to change the pupil or the social structure? Again, a critical theory of administration will also be concerned with the "incidental learnings" (Goldhammer, 1969) that even so-called effective and traditional structures produce; is there a dialectic between achievement and obedience and should a democratic society allow one in order to support the other?

In this regard, educational administration might well echo Ogbu's (1981: 15) directive to an ethnography of education: "...an adequate ethnography of schooling cannot be confined to studying events in school, classrooms, the home, or playground. One must also study relevant societal and historical forces."

One need not completely accept the assertion that those forces compel a complete "correspondence between the social organization of schooling and that of work" (Bowles & Gintis, 1977: 151) to be concerned about the often subtle ways that schooling may duplicate external social structure. Concurrently, administrative theorists must also wonder whether the nature of administration in schooling as it is presently constituted makes any difference at all to pupils' later occupation. Shea (1976: 514) contends:

> That not everyone can go to college is one matter; that who does go to college is determined during the initial stages of the life cycle is another. Available research suggests early selection points for later attainments. (Emphasis added.)

Surely a finding such as this, given its accuracy, would compel administrative theorists to begin a re-thinking of the nature and effects of their discipline.

The Administrative Response

Despite the many years of concern shown by educational philosophers over the nexus of school and society, the administrative response has largely (and -- perhaps -- until recently) been to develop a form of psychologism whose usefulness to practice is limited. It seems strange indeed that in a field whose concern lies primarily with the interrelationship of groups, the major sources of development concern themselves with theories of individualistic improvement. The mainstream approach to administrative theory is one which tends to concentrate on how the administrator can assure a successful psychological "fit" between institution and individual: thus, most preparation material tends to emphasize such concepts as "role," taken as "bundles of interpersonal definitions, rights and responsibilities" (Anderson, 1974: 32); "motivation," taken as "motivation of subordinates and associates" (Owens, 1981: 106); "leadership,"

taken as "an interactive process between the leader and the group," (Owens, 1981: 146); "climate," taken "roughly as the personality of the school," (Hoy & Miskel, 1982: 186) and "communication," whose key issue is taken as "whether administrators communicate effectively or poorly" (Hoy & Miskel, 1982: 293). Perhaps the orientation to "Eupsychian Management" (Sergiovanni & Carver, 1980: 50) as a model for the field best exemplifies the strong social psychological bias of the discipline.

It need not be disputed that these are indeed important topics for administrators; from a critical perspective, however, one must wonder whether these concepts become devices which tend to disguise under an ideology of change and progress the basic features of structural domination. Benson (1977: 6), for example, claims:

> Even [organizational] studies which claim purely objective, scientific interests tend to pose research questions from an essentially technical-administrative point of view. The interest implicit in the research questions is typically one of administrative control.

Such control can lead to the institutional repression of personal freedoms, or, to be discussed, to the distortion of communicative acts, and it is with this that our concern lies.

One's "role" in the institution can be examined, for example, from several perspectives: the most common is to consider how the idiographic dimensions must be accomodated to the nomothetic. But another perspective could ask why is it that many of the nomothetic characteristics of certain authority-centered roles requires individuals who share idiographic likenesses? More eloquently, certainly, Griffiths (1979: 46) gets to parts of the issue here when he states that "One wonders why more attention has not been paid to the disregard for the plight of women and minorities by organizational theorists..."

Another aspect conerns the disbursement of organizationally specific knowledge to certain roles and prompts one to ask why and in what fashion. The role of "principal," for example, allows one to speak of certain things forbidden to the role of "teacher," particularly insofar as the teaching role is often circumscribed in such a way as to make it difficult for a teacher to provide an organizationally-approved critique of administration. It can be done, of course, but it takes either courage or foolhardiness.

The orientation to the issues of motivation, leadership, climate and communication often takes the form of a set of technical procedures designed to initiate the recalcitrant member into the organizational viewpoint. An institutional leader is advised to jump between task and relationship depending on the needs of the situation, i.e., of the organization. The reliance on social-psychological indicators of human performance, without a concommitant consideration of the ethical issue of manipulation possible to organizational leaders, is in itself disturbing.

The same concern presents itself when addressing motivational strategies. A cynic might consider this body of research to be one concerning how to get individuals to come to work in environments devoid of personal authority and personal pleasure. While we are not cynics, the uses of the research is such that it seems to be a means of increasing individual employee satisfaction without allowing for actual employee involvement and dialogue on the nature of work: its alienating effects, its satisfying effects, its distribution of rewards. As long as the literature here concentrates on providing sets of techniques to allow administrators to increase employee morale, without allowing for the critical evaluation of the nature of the institution itself, it will remain inadequate for the purposes of a critical theory.

With the areas of climate and communication, again the emphasis lies on creating improvement which ultimately is to the benefit of the established structure of the institution. The theories neglect to mention the possibility of happy slavery: of people working together under conditions that they can't recognize as oppressive. This analogy is far-fetched, yet makes the point that developing psychological mechanisms to alleviate the tensions of life in school is no substitute for consideration of the sociological defects of the institution. In the same way, one can have precise and effective communication strategies which gloss over the content and intent of what is communicated. Distorted communication, in the sense that Mueller (1973) discusses this term, can yet be effective and efficient.

I see no reason why administrative theory in education cannot adopt a perspective consistent with the critical evaluation of empirical research for the purpose of developing administrators as concerned about the effects of school structure as about developing psychological states of mind conducive to institutionalism. Yet we tend to feel that if we admit the importance of critique we are in effect cutting our own throats. This attitude is changing, particularly with respect to developments in organizational theory. Perrow (1979) for example, is an organizational theorist in the mainstream tradition, yet one who can adequately and succinctly disect that body of literature with a view toward its conceptual clarity. His analysis of some of the literature in leadership research is classic. How disappointing, then, it is to read an educational writer comment that:

> ...work such as that of Perrow (a sociologist) probably reflects academic chutzpah as much as genuine theoretic or conceptual analysis , in that it essentially is an attack on the mainstream of contemporary organizational theory (which

> largely has become the province of social psychologists). Views such as Perrow expresses cannot be taken seriously until they are documented by empirical evidence derived from vigorous and rigorously designed research. (Owens, 1981: 221).

Ignoring the uncritical acceptance of what constitutes "empirical research," one is still tempted to ask 1) how such rigourous research will be done on a question not "taken seriously" and 2) whether an "attack on the mainstream" is always devoid of "theoretic and conceptual analysis"? Administrative theorists have an unfortunate tendency to turn theory into theology.

The last few years have developed "alternatives" to mainstream theory, principally the Marxist and the phenomenological approaches, sometimes combined into a term such as "ethno-Marxism." Although I am not currently aware of any strictly "Marxist" theories of educational administration (and I wonder indeed if this is at all possible), the Marxist tradition is certainly alive in organizational theory. Heydebrand (1977) is onesuch who seeks to develop "a dialectical-historical conception [of organizations] based on a critical adaptation of basic Marxian categories and propositions" (1977: 103). Consequently, the intellectual framework adopted depends to a large degree on the interpretation of organizational activity in terms of "social relations of production," "alienation," and "contradictions" inherent in the structure of the capitalistic system.

The phenomenological approach is exemplified by the work of Greenfield who argues (1980: 26) that "The basic problem in the study of organizations is that of understanding human intention and meaning." The reality of organizations is subjective reality: "simply manifestations of mind and will" (1980: 27). This conceptualization of organizations has obvious implications for admini-

strative development and traditional approaches to the methodical analysis of organizations. By looking at organizations as subjectively-created phenomena, attention is focused on how members create moral universes which have as a characteristic unequal power relations. The role of the administrator becomes one of recognizing the existential quality of such relations and, mindful of their Promethean struggle, to simply do what they can.

Benson (1977) has perhaps made the boldest attempt to reconcile these approaches by formulating multi-dimensional indicia. A competent organizational theory, he claims (1977: 16):

> ...must deal with (1) social production of organizational reality ... (2) the political bases of organizational reality .. (3) the connection of organizations to the larger set of structural arrangements in the society; and (4) the continuously emergent character of organizational patterns.

At the same time, Benson is critical of the normal approach to the study of organizations, the "rational, goal-seeking" model which assumes the organization to be bounded in space-time. By examining organizations as social constructions, yet still maintaining an analysis of structural and power elements, Benson identifies a program for research substantially different from the structural/functional model. Still, Benson doesn't develop so much a theory of organization as much as a justified critique of contemporary theory.

These newer approaches to organizational theorizing are both significant and helpful. However, they too are not completely adequate for the task. In the Marxist approach, for example, organizations tend to be seen as reified "actors" that maintain a direct relationship to modes of economic structuration. Little attention is paid to different kinds of organizations or to their possible emancipatory potential. The phenomenological perspective, in turn,

suffers from its neglect of structural considerations, with a consequent over-reliance on a transubjective idealism which cannot find a concrete location.

An integrated perspective seems to offer the most theoretically comprehensive account of organizational life. It would be one which incorporates "phenomenological perspectives, which typically focus at the micro level upon the intersubjective construction of meanings - traditional, ahistorical organizational analyses of structural regularities - and broader sociohistorical perspectives of economy and culture," (Ranson, Hinings, & Greenwood, 1980: 14). Yet if this integrated approach to organizational study is to be of any consequence to educational administration, it must add a critical dimension.

Toward a Theory of Critical Administration

A critical theory of administration should accept and build upon both the hermeneutic and the empirical viewpoints, utilizing analyses of phenomenological interactions, of structural regularities and of social meaning and historical context. Critical theory should also maintain its concern for exposing the practical impediments to unifying theory and practice.

One overarching framework for researching the critical relationship between administration and social structure, for the purpose of improving the educational impact of schooling, might lie in identifying and analyzing the most basic element which allows for the development of organizations and institutions, that of the human capacity for speech. The conception that (educational) institutions can be thought of as speech communities allows the incorporation of hermeneutic, structural and critical elements. The phenomenological approach can be incorporated insofar as it allows one to investigate how meaning about the organization is intersubjectively communicated and created; the structural

approach is necessary because it allows investigation of the "grammar" of the institution, or the structural features that hold the meaningful system together; the critical dimension is necessary because it asks in what ways does the institutional structure contribute to the distortion of communication between individuals.

Held (1980: 257) suggests that contemporary Critical Theory, particularly in Habermas' work, has moved from a critique of "capital," or political economy, to a critique of distorted communication. The conditions for total emancipatory relations, that is, must include the ability to engage in uncoerced, rational discourse: this, in turn, is to presuppose an "ideal speech situation" (Habermas, 1979, 1970b). Ideal speech, in turn, is said to be based on norms of truth, freedom and justice: these "underlie" the conditions for engaging in understandable and truth-presumptive dialogue.

If a purpose of critical theory is to expose "coercion and unequal social relations" (Seward, 1980: 339) as they occur in respect to social institutions, then it is profitable to consider the relationship between given speech communities and the distribution of knowledge and power to those communities. This in turn would allow for the critical reflection by administrators on the methodology of removing distortions which either contribute to the external suppression of interest groups or the the internal acceptance of current conditions by such groups. Theory and practice come closer together, and the rationality of institutions may be based on a substantive rationality founded on universal norms. The question then becomes to what degree does this administrative practice contribute to the development of truth or freedom or justice?

Weber long ago commented that "...the domination exercised in the schools

stereotypes the form and the predominance of the official school language most enduringly and decisively" (1968: 941) and it is this nexus between institutional domination, institutional rationality as manifest in a school language and the possibility of distortion-free discourse that is of particular consequence. Administration is communication and administrators form their own speech communities, as do teachers and pupils. Bates (1981: 19) tells us that:

> Administration is therefore as much a rhetorical activity as a technical one, directed toward the mediation of cultural reproduction through the coupling of the internal culture of the schools with specific external cultures.

This framework allows us to develop an empirically researchable and critically valid understanding of how administrators behave in educational settings and how they indeed influence those settings. Thus, administrators must be familiar with three premises of their institution (Green, 1981: 1):

> ...first, social interaction is a rule-governed system that is culturally and situationally determined; second, classrooms are emerging social systems in which teaching-learning events are not given but rather are constructed as part of the social interactions of participants as they work to achieve communicative, social, and academic goals; and third, classrooms are cross-cultural situations in which the teacher and students are seen as coming from different cultural groups...

Do institutions tend to introduce distortions into the communicative possibilities of the members of the institution? How,in fact,do institutions introduce class distinctions to children? Entering at one end of the institution is the biographically pre-class child; coming out of the institution is the class encoded child; how does administration function to reproduce elements of the class system if indeed it does? (see, Foster, 1980a, 1980b). These are certain questions which need to be addressed in some manner if a critically adequate

theory of administration -- which is both organizational and emancipatory -- is to be reached. Hurn (1978: 275) suggests that:

> New research on linguistic codes and on classroom interaction will, I hope, eventually help us to specify in considerable detail the barriers that prevent children from achieving the kinds of intellectual skills that only a minority presently achieve.

Administrators must be part of such a movement, if only to understand the ways in which they react to the cultural dimensions of their charges and to reflect upon the rationale behind the forms of institutional domination. The ideal of distortion-free communication for the organization becomes one toward which the critical administrator can work.

For now, however, a critical administration must evidence a great concern for the relationship between external and internal structures, viewing schooling as a mediator between these and administration as a force which can serve a negative function in exposing contradictions and distortions and a positive function in attempting to develop an "objectively" rational basis for schooling. The external structure must be considered given the question "Do we wish to construct a more just society?" The internal structure must be considered given the question "Are all children given equal educational opportunity in the schools?" This in turn means abandoning an instrumentally rational approach to administration (how is control most effectively established?) in favor of a more substantive rationality (what and why do we administer?). A critical theory of administration calls then upon positive knowledge, concerning, for example, the nature of speech communities in education, hermeneutic knowledge, concerning, for example, the interpretation of the meaningfulness of the educational experience by different communities and the critical interrelationships that exist between these two dimensions. This does not mean, in

my view, abandoning the traditional content of administrative training programs, but of placing that content in a socio-philosophical and critical context.

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